BERBER MYTHOLOGY

Antaeus, Berber Pantheon, Tinjis, Achamán, Sufax, Guayota, Tibicena, Chaxiraxi, Ayyur, Magec, Maxios, Chijoraji, Achuhucanac, Acoran, Achuguayo, Agurzil

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Introduction

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1

ACHAMÁN

Achamán is the supreme god of the Guanches on the island of Tenerife; he is the father god and creator. The name means literally "the skies", in allusion to the celestial vault (the sky). Achamán, an omnipotent and eternal god, created the land and the water, the fire and the air, and all creatures derived their existence from him. Achamán lived in the heights and sometimes descended upon the summits of the mountains, contemplating his creations.

Other names of Achamán are:

- **Achuhuran**
- **Achahucanac**
- **Achguayaxerax**
- **Achoron**

- **Achaman**

On other islands, its name also varied:

- **Acoran** (Gran Canaria) or **Abora** (La Palma) among others.

References (URLs online)

- Guanche Religion

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Acham%C3%A1n

2

ACHUGUAYO

Achuguayo, god of the moon in Guanche religion in Tenerife. It was the duality of Magec god (god of the sun). It also called him "Father of the times", as he was in charge of regulating.

References (URLs online)

- Guanche Religion

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Achuguayo

3

ACHUHUCANAC

Achuhucanac, rain god in Guanche religion in Tenerife, identified with the supreme god (Achamán). Its name comes from: au_hu_kanak Guanche language that means "that is in the rain".

References (URLs online)

- Guanche Religion

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Achuhucanac

4

ACORAN

Acoran is the name given to the supreme god of the Guanche people on the island of Gran Canaria. Applies to Achamán for the Guanches of Tenerife.

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- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica article on the Gunaches

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Acoran

5

AGURZIL

Agurzil is the Berber god of war in Berber mythology, symbolized by a head of a bull. It was taken by the Berber queen Dihya (Kahina) in her battles against Muslims.

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ANTAEUS

Antaeus () in Greek mythology was a giant, the son of Poseidon and Gaia, whose wife was Tinjis. Greeks of the sixth century BCE, who had established colonies along the coast, located him in the interior desert of Libya.[1] He would challenge all passers-by to wrestling matches, kill them, and collect their skulls, so that he might one day build out of them a temple to his father Poseidon. He was indefatigably strong as long as he remained in contact with the ground (his mother earth), but once lifted into the air he became as weak as other men. Heracles, finding that he could not beat Antaeus by throwing him to the ground, as he would regain his strength and be fortified, discovered the secret of his power and, holding Antaeus aloft, crushed him in a bearhug.[2] The story of Antaeus has been used as a symbol of the spiritual strength which accrues when one rests one's faith on the immediate fact of things. The struggle between Antaeus and Heracles is a favorite subject in ancient and Renaissance sculpture.

Online image: Heracles and Antaeus. Drawing from Nordisk familjebok.

A location for Antaeus somewhere beyond the maghreb might be quite flexible in longitude: when the Roman commander Quintus Sertorius crossed from Hispania to North Africa, he was told by the residents of Tingis (Tangier), far to the west of Libya, that the gigantic remains of Antaeus would be found within a certain tumulus; digging it open, his men found giant bones; closing the site, Sertorius made propitiatory offerings and "helped to magnify the tomb's reputation".[3] In Book IV of Marcus Annaeus Lucanus' epic poem *Pharsalia* (c. 65-61 BC), the story of Hercules' victory over Antaeus is told to the Roman Curio by an unnamed Libyan citizen. Later, the learned client king Juba II of Numidia (died 23 BC), husband of the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra, claimed his descent from a liaison of Hercules with "*Tinga*", the consort of Antaeus.[4]

In the Berber language Antaeus is supposedly known as Änti. A different figure from Egyptian mythology, Anti, was transliterated as "Antaeus" by the Greeks.

Notes

- 1. I. Malkin, *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean*, 1994:181-87, giving sources, noted in Robin Lane Fox, *Travelling Heroes in the Epic Age of Homer*, 2008:182 and note 51.
- 2. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheke* ii. 5; Hyginus, *Fabula* 31.
- 3. Fox 2008:182, noting Plutarch, *Sertorius*9.3-4.Fox 2008:182
- 4. Pliny, *Natural History*,v.2-3; Strabo xvii.3.8 noted in D.W. Roller, *The World of Juba II and Kleopatra Selene*, 2003:54 and 154, and by Fox 2008:182.

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- *This article incorporates text from the* Encyclopædia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, a publication now in the public domain.*

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7

AYYUR

Ayyur was the moon god according to the Berber beliefs. The name "Ayyur" means literally the *moon*, and it was also used as a term to indicate the word "month" and also as a masculine name.

In the fifth century BC, Herodotus wrote that the Berbers sacrificed to the moon and the sun. Ibn Khaldoun stated that the berbers kept idolizing the moon, the sun and other celestial bodies until the fourteenth century AD.

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BERBER MYTHOLOGY

Berber beliefs or **Amazigh beliefs** are the beliefs of the indigenous Berber people of North Africa (not to be confused with the Ancient Egyptians or the Nubians). These beliefs were influenced primarily by the beliefs of the Berbers' Egyptian neighbors, as well as by other people who lived in the area, such as Phoenicians, Jews, Ancient Greeks and Ancient Romans. Berbers had also an influence on these cultures.

Beliefs concerning death

Berber beliefs concerning death changed over time, as evidenced by differing burial customs, pyramids, and tomb types.

Funerary practices

Archaeological research on pre-historic tombs in Northwestern Africa shows that the body of the dead were painted with red ochre. While this practice was known to the Ibero-maurussians, this culture seems to have been primarily a Capsian

culture. The dead were also sometimes buried with shells of ostrich eggs, jewelry, and weapons. Bodies were sometimes placed on one side and folder, while others where buried in a fetal position.[1]

Unlike the Berbers, the Guanches mummified the dead. Additionally, Fabrizio Mori discovered a Libyan mummy older than any comparable Ancient Egyptian mummy in 1958.[2]

Cult of the dead

The authors of the book *The Berbers* stated that the cult of the death was one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Berbers in antiquity.[3] Pomponius Mela reported that the Augelae (Modern Awjila in Libya) considered the spirits of their ancestors to be gods. They swore by them and consulted them. After making requests, they slept in their tombs to await responses in dreams.[4]

Herodotus (484 BCca.425 BC) noted the same practice among the Nasamones who inhabited the deserts around Siwa and Augila. He wrote:

[..]They swear by the men among themselves who are reported to have been the most righteous and brave, by these, I say, laying hands upon their tombs; and they divine by visiting the sepulchral mounds of their ancestors and lying down to sleep upon them after having prayed; and whatsoever thing the man sees in his dream, this he accepts.[5]

The worship of saints still exists among the modern Berbers in the form of Maraboutism, which is wide spread in northwest Africa, especially in Morocco. The Berbers worshipped their kings, too.[6] The tombs of the Numidian kings are among the most notable monuments left by the Classical Berbers.

Ancient Berber Tombs

The tombs of the early Berbers and their ancestors indicate that the Berbers and their ancestors (the Ibero-maurussians and Capsians) believed in life after death. The prehistoric men of northwest Africa buried bodies in little holes. When they realized that bodies buried in unsecured holes were dug up by wild animals, they began to bury them in deeper ones. Later, they buried the dead in caves, tumuli, tombs in rocks, mounds, and other types of tombs.[1]

These tombs evolved from primitive structures to much more elaborate ones, such as the pyramidal tombs spread throughout Northern Africa. The honor of being buried in such a tomb appears to have been reserved for those who were most important to their communities.

Online image: The pyramid of Medracen

These pyramid tombs have attracted the attention of some scholars, such as Mohammed Chafik who wrote a book discussing the history of several of the tombs that have survived into modern times. He tried to relate the pyramidal Berber tombs with the great Egyptian pyramids on the basis of the etymological and historical data [7]. The best known Berber pyramids are the 19-meter pre-Roman Numidian pyramid of Medracen and the 30-meter ancient Mauretanian pyramid[8]. The Mauretanian pyramid is also known as "Kbour-er-Roumia" or "Tomb of the Roman Woman" mistranslated by the French colonizer as "Tomb of the Christian Woman"[8].

Megalithic Culture

Rocks were considered to be holy by many prehistoric peoples, including the Berbers. Saint Augustine mentioned that the polytheistic Africans worshipped the rocks.[9] Apuleius stated as well that rocks were worshipped in the second century A.D..[9] The megalithic culture may have been part of a cult of the dead or of star-worship.[9]

There are prehistoric megalithic constructs in several North-western African sites, although they have not been studied thoroughly. The Phoenicians had also their megalithic sites, which they called *Bethel* (House of God). The Mogador monument on the Atlantic coast is sometimes believed to be of Phoenician origin.[9]

The monument of Mzora (also spelled as Msoura) is the best known megalithic monument in northwest Africa. It is composed of a circle of megaliths surrounding a tumulus. The highest megalith is longer than 5 meters. According to legend, it is the sepulchre of the mythic Libyan king *Antaeus*.[10] Another megalithic monument was discovered in 1926 to south of Casablanca. The monument was engraved with funerary inscriptions in the Libyco-Berber script known as Tifinagh.[9]

Solar and lunar worship

The moon is called *Ayyur* in the Berber language, a name shared with the Berber moon god.[11]

Herodotus mentioned that the ancient Berbers (known to him as Libyans) worshipped the moon and sun and sacrificed to them. He reported:

They begin with the ear of the victim, which they cut off and throw over their house: this done, they kill the animal by twisting the neck. They sacrifice to the Sun and Moon, but not to any other god. This worship is common to all the Libyans.[12]

Tullius Cicero (105-43 BCE) also reported the same cult in *On the Republic (Scipio's Dream)*:

When I (Scipio) was introduced to him, the old man (Massinissa, king of Numidia) embraced me, shed tears, and then, looking up to heaven, exclaimed I thank thee, O supreme Sun, and you also, you other celestial beings, that before I departed from this life I behold in my kingdom, and in my palace, Publius Cornelius Scipio ....*[13]*

There were some Latin inscriptions found in Northwest Africa dedicated to the sun-god. An example is the inscription found in Souk Ahras (the birthplace of Saint Augustine; Tagaste in Algeria) written as: *Solo Deo Invicto*.[14] Samuel the Confessor appears to have suffered from the sun-worshiping Berbers who tried unsuccessfully to obligate him worshiping the sun.

In Awelimmiden Tuareg, the name *Amanai* is believed to have the meaning of "God". The Ancient Libyans may have worshipped the setting sun, which was impersonated by Amon, who was represented by the ram's horns.[15]

The sun was worshipped besides the mountains (eg: Atlas),[16] rocks, caves, and rivers.[17]

Egyptian-Berber beliefs

The Ancient Egyptians were the neighbours of the Berbers. They may even have had an ancient common central saharan origin. Therefore, it is sometimes supposed that some deities were originally worshipped by the Ancient Egyptians, and the Ancient Libyans (Berbers) as well. The Egyptian-Berber deities can be distinguished according to their origin.

Egyptian deities

The Eastern ancient Berbers worshipped Isis and Set. That was reported by Herodotus when saying:

Cow's flesh, however, none of these tribes (Libyan Tribes) ever taste, but abstain from it for the same reason as the Egyptians, neither do they any of them breed swine. Even at Cyrene, the women think it wrong to eat the flesh of the cow, honoring in this Isis, the Egyptian goddess, whom they worship both with fasts and festivals. The Barcaean women abstain, not from cow's flesh only, but also from the flesh of swine.[18]

Those Berbers supposedly didn't eat the swine's flesh, because it was associated with *Set*, while they didn't eat the cow's flesh, because it was associated with Isis.[19]

Osiris was among the Egyptian deities who were venetrated in Libya. However, Dr. Budge (in addition to a few other scholars) believed that Osiris was originally a

Libyan god saying of him that "Everything which the texts of all periods recorded concerning him goes to show that he was an indigenous god of North-east Africa, and that his home and origin were possibly Libyan."[20]

Berber deities

The Egyptians considered some Egyptian deities to have had a Libyan origin, such as Neith who has been considered, by Egyptians, to have emigrated from Libya to establish her temple at Sais in the Nile Delta. Some legends tell that Neith was born around Lake Tritons (In modern Tunisia).

It is also notable that some Egyptian deities were depicted with Berber (ancient Libyan) characters, such as "Ament" who was depicted with two feathers which were the normal ornaments of the Ancient Libyans as they were depicted by the Ancient Egyptians.

Amun as a common deity

The most remarkable common god between them was Amun. This god is hard to attribute to only one pantheon. Although the most modern sources ignored the existence of Amun in the Berber mythology, he was maybe the greatest ancient Berber god.[21] He was honored by the Ancient Greeks in Cyrenaica, and was united with the Phoenician god Baal due to Libyan influence.[22] Some depictions of the ram across North Africa belong to the lythic period which is situated between 9600 BC and 7500 BC.

The most famous Amun's temple in Ancient Libya was the temple at the oasis of Siwa. The name of the ancient Berber tribes: *Garamantes* and *Nasamonians* are believed by some scholars to be related to the name *Amon*.[23]

Phoenician-Berber beliefs

The Phoenicians were originally a Semitic people that once inhabited the coasts of modern Lebanon. They were seafarers and they founded Carthage in 814 BC. They later gave birth to the so-called *Punic culture* which had its roots in the Berber and Phoenician cultures. Some scholars distinguish the relationships between the Phoenicians and the Berbers in two phases:

Before the Battle of Himera (480 BC)

When the Phoenicians established in Northwest Africa, they stayed in the coastal regions to avoid wars with the Berbers. They maintained their deities which they brought from their homelands. The early Carthaginians had two important deities, *Baal* and *Astarte*.

After the Battle of Himera

Carthage began to ally with the Berber tribes after the battle of Himera, in which the Carthaginians were defeated by the Greeks. In addition to political changes, the Carthaginians imported some of the Berber deities.

Baal was the primary god worshipped in Carthage. Later, Baal was united with the Libyan god Amon to become Baal-Hammon. Depictions of this deity are found in several sites across northwest Africa. The goddess Astarte was replaced by a native goddess, *Tanit*, which is thought to be of Berber origin. The name itself, *Tanit*, has a Berber (Tamazight) linguistic structure. Feminine names begin and end with "T" in the Berber language. Some scholars believe that the Egyptian goddess Neith was related to the Libyan goddess Tanit (Ta-neith). There are also Numidian and Phoenician names that apparently contain roots from the god *Baal*, such as *Adherbal* and *Hannibal*.

Greek-Berber beliefs

The well-known connections between the ancient Berbers and the ancient Greeks were in Cyrenaica where the Greeks had established colonies. The Greeks influenced the eastern Berber pantheon, but they were also influenced by the Berber culture and beliefs. Generally, the Libyan-Greek relationships knew two different periods. In the first period, the Greeks had peaceful relationships with the Libyans. Later, there existed wars between them. These social relationships were mirrored in their beliefs.

Before the battle of Irassa (570 BC)

The first notable appearance of the Libyan influence on the Cyrenaican-Greek beliefs is the name *Cyrenaica* itself. This name was originally the name of a legendary (mythic) Berber woman warrior who was known as *Cyre*. Cyre was ,according to the legend, a couragious lion-hunting woman. She gave her name to the city *Cyrenaica*. The emigrating Greeks made her as their protector besides their Greek god Apollo.[24]

The Greeks of Cyrenaica seemed also to have adopted some Berber customs and intermarried with the Berber women. Herodotus (Book IV 120) reported that the Libyans taught the Greeks how to yoke four horses to a chariot. The Cyrenaican Greeks built temples for the Libyan god Amon instead of their original god Zeus. They later identified their supreme god Zeus with the Libyan Amon.[25] Some of them continued worshipping Amon himself. Amon's cult was so widespread among the Greeks that even Alexander the Great decided to be declared as the son of Zeus in the Siwan temple by the Libyan priests of Amon.[26]

The ancient historians mentioned that some Greek deities were of Libyan origin. The daughter of Zeus Athena was considered by some ancient historians, like Herodotus, to have been of Libyan origin. Those ancient historians stated that she was originally honored by the Berbers around Lake Tritonis where she has been born from the god Poseidon and Lake Tritonis, according to the Libyan legend. Herodotus wrote that the Aegis and the clothes of Athena are typical for Libyan woman.

Herodotus stated also that Poseidon (an important Greek sea god) was adopted from the Libyans by the Greeks. He emphasized that no other people worshipped Poseidon from early times than the Libyans who spread his cult:

[..]these I think received their naming from the Pelasgians, except Poseidon; but about this god the Hellenes learnt from the Libyans, for no people except the Libyans have had the name of Poseidon from the first and have paid honour to this god always.[27]

Some other Greek deities were related to Libya. The goddess Lamia was believed to have originated in Libya, like Medusa and the Gorgons. The Greeks seem also to have met the god Triton in Libya. The Greeks may have believed that the Hesperides was situated in modern Morocco. Some scholars situate it in Tangier where Antaios lived, according to some myths. The Hesperides were believed to be the daughters of Atlas a god that is associated with the Atlas mountains by Herodotus. The Atlas mountain was worshipped by the Berbers.

After the Battle of Irassa

The Greeks and the Libyans began to break their harmony in the period of the Battus II.[28] Battus II began secretly to invite other Greek groups to Libya. The Libyans considered that as a danger that has to be stopped. The Berbers began to fight against the Greeks, sometimes in alliance with the Egyptians and other times with the Carthaginians. Nevertheless, the Greeks were the victors.

Online image: Antaeus is depicted with long hair and beard, contrary to Heracles.

Some historians believe that the myth of Antaios was a reflection of those wars between the Libyans and Greeks.[29] The legend tells that he was the undefeatable protector of the Libyans. He was the son of the god Poseidon and Gaia. He was the husband of the Berber goddess Tinjis. He used to protect the lands of the Berbers until he was slain by the Greek hero Heracles who married Tingis and fathered the son Sufax (Berber-Greek son). Some Libyan kings, like Juba I, claimed to be the descendants of Sufax. While some sources described him as the king of Irassa, Plutarch reported that the Libyans buried Antaios in Tangier:

In this city (Tangier) the Libyans say that Antaeus is buried; and Sertorius had his tomb dug open, the great size of which made him disbelieve the Barbarians...(Plutarch, The Parallel Lives)[30]

In the Greek iconography, Antaeus was clearly distinguished from the Greek appearance. He was depicted with long hair and beard that was typical for the Eastern Libyans.

Roman-Berber beliefs

The Romans allied firstly with the Numidians against Carthage. They defeated it in 146BCE. But later, they annexed Numidia to the Roman Empire.

Before Romanization

The Berbers fought against the Romans and Byzantines. They had war deities such as Gurzil and Ifri. They honored the war goddess Ifri or *Ifru* who was considered to be the protector of her worshipers and was depicted on the Berber coins, and seemed to have been an influential goddess in North Africa. Pliny the Elder mentioned that nobody in Africa decided to do anything before prior invocation of *Africa* (The Latin name of Ifri). This goddess was represented in diverse ways on Numidian coins from the first century BCE. When the Romans conquered Northwest Africa, it appeared on the coins of the Roman states in North Africa.

Gurzil was a bull-shaped war god who is identified with the son of Ammon. He was taken by the Berbers to their battles against the Romans. Corippus mentioned that the chef Laguatan's (Or Luwata as it was known to the Arabs) *Iarna* took his god *Gurzil* into his battle against the Byzantines. Iarna was a Moorish ruler and a high priest of Gurzil. He was killed by the Byzantines. After the Moors where defeated he fled with the *sacred image* of Gurzil. But he was caught and killed and the image destroyed.[31]

There was among the ruins of Ghirza in Libya a temple, which may have been dedicated to Gurzil, and the name of the town itself may even be related to his name.

Roman influence

When Northwest Africa was annexed to the Roman Empire, the Berber began to worship the Roman deities like Jupiter who was known as Mastiman. Jupiter was also identified with the Libyan Ammon[32]

Another feared god was Saturn. He communicated with believers in dreams, and Northwestern Africans venerated him with human sacrifices, as mentioned by

Tertullian. He wrote that the children were openly sacrificed to Saturn in Africa. The historians believe he was closer to the Baal-Hammon cult than that of the Roman Saturn.[33]

When a native Libyan called Septimus Severus became Emperor, the cult of Tanit was introduced to Rome.

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See also (online edition)

- Berber pantheon
- Marabout

Extern links

- Recherches Sur La Religion Des Berberes par Réné Basset (fr)

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9

BERBER PANTHEON

Traditional **Berber pantheon** contains a variety of gods. Although most Berbers are now Muslim (and almost none profess paganism), vestiges of their previous religion remain, including traditions such as "Tislit" and her husband "Anzar".

- Africa (mythology) or Ifri or Ifru: a Berber goddess adopted by the Romans.
- Agurzil (alternatively, Gurzil): Berber god of war, represented by a head of bull by the Luwata nomads.
- Amun: an oracle god.
- Antaeus: a giant from Ancient Libya.
- Anzar: the rain, god of the rain.
- Atlas: a mountain worshiped by the Berbers, according to Strabo and Herodotus.
- Ayyur: the moon, but also a Berber god.
- Baal-Hammon or Baal-Ammon: A Carthaginian god worshipped in north-western Africa.
- Ifrikish son of Kais: an alleged ancient Berber king - When the Hebrews invaded Jericho, few survived. Ifrikish son of Kais led some of Jericho's giants to escape to Africa. They killed the king of that country and settled there, according to some Arab sources.

- Iguc or Iyuc (as G often beceomes Y etc in Berber), god of the rain at Berghwata of Morocco.
- Isis: an Egyptian goddess worshiped by the Libyans (i.e. Berbers) according to Herodotus.
- Makurgun: Berber god, of Punico-Berber origin.
- Maqurtum: an Amazigh God of Punico-Berber origin.
- Mastiman: a Moorish deity mentioned by Corippus.
- Neith: a Libyan goddess mentioned by Herodotus.
- Osiris: an Egyptian deity worshiped by the Libyans, according to Herodotus.
- Poseidon: a Libyan god mentioned by Herodotus.
- Saturn: a Roman deity worshiped by the Berbers. He was paid honour by human sacrifices, according to Tertullian.
- Sinifer: God of war among the Luwata.
- Sophox: Son of Heracles and Tinjis according to Plutarch.
- Suggen: or Seggen, name of a Berber divinity, name which is nowadays found in Aïn Me Lila - Algeria.
- Sun-cult: a cult that was widespread among the Berbers.
- Saint worship: a cult which dates back to antiquity.
- Tanit or Tannit or Tinnit: a Berber Libyan goddess worshiped in Carthage.
- Tililwa: name of a Berber divinity.
- Tinjis: the mythical wife of the half-god Antaeus.
- Triton: a god the Greeks met in Libya, according to Herodotus.
- Tislit: Bride of the rain-god Anzar (lit.: the bride).
- Warsisima: an Amazigh Berber god; this name is possibly composed of: name + prefix: wer+isem (without name)

See also (online edition)

- Berber beliefs
- Berbers

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Berber%5Fpantheon

10

CHAXIRAXI

Chaxiraxi is the native goddess known as the Sun Mother in the Guanche religion. The goddess Chaxiraxi was one of the principal goddesses of the pantheon of the Guanches. Chaxiraxi was later associated with an alleged appearance circa 1400 or 1401 of the Virgin of Candelaria on Güímar, on the island of Tenerife. Her son is Chijoraji.

References (URLs online)

- (Spanish) Guanche Religion
- (Spanish) Mundo Guanche: Chaxiraxi

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Chaxiraxi

11

CHIJORAJI

Chijoraji or **Chijoragi**, name given to the infant Jesús in her hand that carries the Virgin of Candelaria (called by the guanches Chaxiraxi) in Tenerife. Chijoraji is the aboriginal Guanches name given to this representation of Christ.

References (URLs online)

- Guanche Religion

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Chijoraji

12

GUAYOTA

Guayota, was the principal malignant deity and Achamán adversary. According to Guanche legend, Guayota lived inside of the Teide volcano, one of the gateways to the underworld. Guayota was said to be represented as a black dog, and he was accompanied by demons, also in the form of black dogs, known as Tibicenas.

According to legend, Guayota kidnapped Magec (the sun) and shut it up in the Teide, plunging the world into darkness. Humans prayed to Achamán who saved Magec, and instead locked Guayota up in the Teide. Guayota is the king of evil genies, and was worshiped in the island of Tenerife in the Guanche religion.

References (URLs online)

- Guanche Religion

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Guayota

13

MAGEC

Magec, in Tenerife, was the god of the Sun and the light and also thought to be one of the principal divinities in Guanche religion. According to legend, Magec was captured by Guayota and held him prisoner inside Teide; Magec was later liberated by Achamán.

References (URLs online)

- Guanche Religion

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Magec

14

MAXIOS

Maxios or "**Dioses Paredros**", benevolent minor gods or genies in the Guanche religion in Tenerife; domestic spirits and guardians of specific places. These were thought to be mediators between humans and Chaxiraxi, the great celestial mother.

References (URLs online)

- Guanche Religion

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Maxios

15

SUFAX

Sufax (also *Sophax*, *Syphax* or *Sufaqs* like in the name of the current city Sfax, Tunisia) was a hero from the Berber and Greek mythologies.

According to the myth, he is the son of Tinjis from her second marriage to Hercules, and the grandson of Poseidon and Gaia. According to the myth, Sufax replaced Antaeus as a guard of the country of the Berbers (or Imazighen). He is said to be the founder of Tangier in memory to his mother.

According to the Berber mythology, many of the Berber kings are descendents of Suphax who defended their lands after defeating his enemy Antaeus. He had a son, Diodorus, who reigned over many North African Berber tribes with the help of the Olympians.

According to the Ancient Greek historian Plutarch, many of the myths were created in order to give credits to the Numidian king Juba II who considered himself a descendent of Diodorus and Hercules.

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Sufax

16

TIBICENA

A **Tibicena**, also known as **Guacanchas**, was a mythological creature of the Guanches, prehispanic inhabitants of Tenerife. Tibicenas were imagined to be demons or genies who had the bodies of great wild dogs with red eyes, covered by long, black wool. They lived in deep caves inside the mountains.

Some existing caves today are still referred to as Tibicena lairs, such as "Cueva del Tibicena". According to myth, Tibicenas attacked livestock and persons, particularly at night. Guanche mythology posited Tibicenas as offspring of Guayota, (the devil or malignant deity). Inhabitants of Tenerife and Gran Canaria shared a belief in them.

Sources

- Cioranescu, A. (1977)- Galindo A. (1632), *Historia de la Conquista de las Siete Islas*, Goya, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, pág.149

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Tibicena

17

TINJIS

Tinjis (also called **Tinga**, and also spelled as **Tingis**) was in Berber and Greek Mythology the wife of Antaeus, son of Poseidon and Gaia.

The historian and archaeologist *Mustapha Ouachi* noticed that the city Tangier is geographically related to its myth. Because Tangier lies off the coast which means the sea and the earth, and that is associated with the mother and father of her first husband (Antaios). Because the mother of Antaios *Gaia* was the goddess of the earth whereas the father of Antaios was Poseidon who was the god of the sea, according to the Berber legend. In addition, Herodotus considered Poseidon as a Libyan (Berber) god that has been adopted by the Greeks.

The Berbers believed, according to Plutarch, that Heracles consorted with Tinga after the death of Antaios (Her husband) and gave birth to Sophox. According to their myth, Sophox has built the city "Tangier" (which was known as **Tingis** in the ancient sources) and named it after his mother.

In fact, Tangier is believed to have been built by the Phoenicians before this story. But Tangier seemed to have been an important city in an early short lived kingdom which is known as Mauretania that has been founded by the king Syphax who has a similar name to the mythical king and founder of Tangier: *Sophox*.

Tingis is also the name of a Moroccan American magazine.

See also (online edition)

- Tangier
- Sufax
- Antaios

Websites (URLs online)

- Plutarch, The Parallel Lives: The Life of Sertorius

A hyperlinked version of this chapter is at http://booksllc.net?q=Tinjis

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